

U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 09/816,784  
Amendment dated August 8, 2003  
Reply to OA of April 8, 2003

*Amendments to the Claims*

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Claim 1 (Currently Amended): A dry etching method comprising the steps of:  
  
preparing a cobalt-platinum alloy layer to be etched; and  
  
dry-etching said cobalt-platinum alloy layer using a mask made of a tantalum or a tantalum nitride under a reaction gas of a carbon monoxide with an additive of a nitrogen containing compound gas.

Claim 2 (Currently Amended): A microfabrication method comprising the steps of:  
  
forming a mask made of a tantalum on a cobalt-platinum alloy layer to be etched; and  
  
dry-etching said cobalt-platinum alloy layer using said mask under a reaction gas of a carbon monoxide with an additive of a nitrogen containing compound gas.

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Claim 3 (Original): The method as claimed in claim 2, wherein said step of forming a mask includes forming a resist pattern on said layer to be etched and sputtering a mask layer using a tantalum target.

Claim 4 (Currently Amended): A microfabrication method comprising the steps of:  
  
forming a mask made of a tantalum nitride on a cobalt-platinum alloy layer to be etched; and  
  
dry-etching said cobalt-platinum alloy layer using said mask under a reaction gas of a carbon monoxide with an additive of a nitrogen containing compound gas.

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Claim 5 (Original): The method as claimed in claim 4, wherein said step of forming a mask includes forming a resist pattern on said layer to be etched and reactive-sputtering a mask layer using a tantalum target under a reaction gas containing at least a nitrogen gas.

Claim 6 (Original): The method as claimed in claim 5, wherein said reaction gas containing at least a nitrogen gas is a mixture gas of an argon gas and a nitrogen gas.

Claim 7 (Original): The method as claimed in claim 4, wherein said step of forming a mask includes forming a resist pattern on said layer to be etched and sputtering a mask layer using a tantalum nitride target.

Claim 8 (Withdrawn): A dry etching mask used in dry-etching under a reaction gas of a carbon monoxide with an additive of a nitrogen containing compound gas, said mask being made of a tantalum or a tantalum nitride.